Lifting of the freeze on Cotton Exports

4549. SHRI SURESH KALMADI : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) wheher it is a fact that Government have lifted the freeze on export of raw cotton ;

(b) when was the export of raw cotton frozen last ; and

(c) what are the reasons for lifting the freeze?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The export of contracted quantities of raw cotton was suspended on 9-2-94.

(c) The step was taken to honour contracted export commitments. Government have also taken a number of steps to improve fibre availability in the country. These steps include placing cotton imports under Open General Licence with Zero import duty as also import of 30,000 MT of Viscose Staple Fibre on concessional import duty.

International Conference on Wool

4550. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI : SHRI AHMED MOHAMEDBHAI PATEL :

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether over 400 wool growers, manufacturers and experts from the World over held and International conference in the month of March, 1994 ;

(b) if so, how many countries participated in the conference ; and

(c) what were the main subjects discussed in the conference and the decisions arrived at therein?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY) : (a) Indian Woollen Mills' Federation, Bombay organised the 63rd International Wool Textiles Conference at New Delhi in the month of March, 1994. It was attended by over 400 delegates.

(b) 26 countries participated in the conference.

(c) As per the information received from IWMF the following subjects were discussed :—

1. Wool marketing policy of the grower countries like Australia. New Zealand, South Africa, Argentina, Uruguay and the United Kingdom.

2. Raw wool specifications and physical and chemical aspects of processing of wool.

3. Primary Processors Group covering, scouring and combing.

4. Production and trading in yarn and fabrics on a global basis.

5. Contracts and commercial regulations.

6. Statistics for the world wollen industry.

Improving the Quality of Cotton

4551. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI : SHRI AHMED MOHMEDBHAI PATEL :

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is an urgent need for improving the quality of cotton which has been rated as one of the most contaminated cotton in the world by International agencies ;

(b) whether according to the experts, contamination in the Indian cotton includes coloured thread, human hair and many extraneous material thrown in the cotton after picking or during transportation ;

(c) if so, what are the steps being taken to improve the quality of cotton which has been largely rejected by the foreign countries ;

(d) whether Seminars on the cotton perspective on quality and development being held in India ; and

(e) what are the other measures being taken to improve the quality of the cotton in India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY) : (a) and (b) There is a need for improving the quality of cotton and reduce the levels of contamination present in cotton today. Deficiencies at various stages of post harvest management and obsolete ginning and pressing machinery leads to contamination which includes presence of non-cotton fibres such as jute/hessin. woven plastics, organic matters like leaves, feathers, leather as well as substances like grease/oil, tar, etc.

(c) to (e) It is not correct that Indian cotton has been largely rejected by foreign countries. We have been exporting cotton regularly. However, there is a need to improve the quality of cotton and towards this end Govt. has drawn up an Action Plan for improvement in ginning and pressing industry which includes *inter alia* programme of education, training of workers, preparation of maintenance manuals for machinery.

Utilisation of Land Occupied by Closed Textile Mills in Ahmedabad

4552. SHRI AHMED MOHMEDBHAI PATEL : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have taken steps to utilise the land occupied by some of the closed textile mills in Ahmedabad in a bid to shore up the economy of Gujarat ;

(b) if so, whether the State Government had taken over 16 sick textile mills in 1986 but restarted only 6 ;

(c) what efforts are being made to restart remaining textile mills ;

(d) what is the total number of sick textile mills which are not functioning in Gujarat at present :

(e) what is the total number of workers affected due to the closure ;

(f) what efforts are being made to re-employ them and clear their dues ; and

(g) whether the land occupied by closed textile mills will be utilised for other useful purposes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY) : (a) According to the policy laid down by the Government of Gujarat, surplus land with differernt textile mills is being sold by the Gujarat State Textile Corporation Limited (A Government of Gujarat Enterprise).

(b) As per the information provided by the State Government, Government of Gujarat had nationalised 12 closed mills in January, 1986 out of which 6 mills are being run by the Gujarat State Textile Corporation.

(c) Government have set up Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction to evolve and manage rehabilitation packages in respect of viable sick/closed mills.

(d) and (e) As on 31-1-94, 18 mills were registered with Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) as sick and were reported to be not functioning. The number of workers affected is 41659.

(f) While there is no scheme to re-employ the workers of closed mills, however, Government has created a Textile Workers Rehabilitation Fund Scheme to provide *interim relief* to the affected workers of permanently/partially closed textile mills on a tapering basis for 3 years.

(g) It is for the State Government to take a suitable decision.

Modernisation of Powerlooms in Gujarat

4553. SHRIMATI URMILABEN CHIMANBHAI PATEL : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Gujarat Government has sent any proposal for providing financial assistance to modernise powerloom in the State ; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY) : (a) No, Madam.

(b) Doesn't arise.